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Dear Mr Maher

**17/05026/EIA : Erection of two poultry sheds with office/wash facilities; 4 feed silos; creation of vehicular access with visibility splays, estate road and yard; formation of screening bunds : Proposed Poultry Units to the North East of Aston Munslow, Shropshire**

*The Campaign to Protect Rural England supports a beautiful and living Shropshire Countryside that is valued and enjoyed by all. We support development in the right place which is sympathetic to the landscape and to the needs of local communities and those who work within them. We are conscious of the importance of agriculture and its need to be financially viable. We are also conscious of the growing economic value of tourism in the Shropshire Hills.*

### **Setting and Landscape**

The site is in the middle of the Corvedale, between the Brown Clee and Wenlock Edge. The AONB covers most of the Corvedale but there is a slice along the B4368 where it follows the contour lines and is just outside the AONB. The site in question is on the south side of the road and 150 metres from the northern boundary of the AONB. It is just over the brow from the road and although not visible from the immediate road will be visible from both the northern and the southern slopes of the AONB. The application is on a greenfield site between the villages of Aston Munslow and Munslow; the applicant's farm and associated farm buildings are some 3 miles from the site.

The villages of Munslow and Aston Munslow are both conservation areas and are noted for their considerable number of listed buildings: there are 46 listed buildings, 5 of them being 2\* and one historic parkland also 2\*. There are two pubs, both listed and a number of B&Bs. All of these tourist destinations are well publicised and are important to the local economy. Tourism in South Shropshire is low key and visitors come here to enjoy and explore the tranquillity and beauty of the Corvedale.

## Shropshire Hills AONB

This application is on a greenfield site and not related to the rest of the applicant's agricultural operation. Poultry Units are intrusive in the landscape, not only in their design but also in the activity associated with their operation. This includes farm and large vehicles accessing the site, storage and subsequent spreading of manure and the associated odour and potential leaching of the water course which feed into the Corve. All of these issues affect the AONB and the following policies both national and local should be taken into account when considering the application:

- *NPPF Para 14 Footnote 9 highlights AONBs as an **exception to a presumption in favour of development**, as one of the few types of special area where "specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*
- *NPPF Para 116 states that Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in **exceptional circumstances** and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*
  - *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
  - *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
  - *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated*
- *Shropshire Council's SAMDev, at policy MD7b– General Management of Development in the Countryside, states, under Explanation at Para 3.67:*

*The changing needs and effects of agricultural and other related enterprises in the countryside are a particular local issue, in particular the impacts of large scale agricultural buildings. General sustainable design criteria and development management considerations are as relevant to this type of development as other proposals in the countryside and the Plan seeks to balance the needs of the countryside as a working environment with its role as a place to live and enjoy. The policy defines the primary considerations that will be taken into account in considering agricultural development proposals which require planning consent. Additional criteria set out in other relevant policy such as MD2 Sustainable Design and MD12 Natural Environment which, for example, highlights special requirements in the Shropshire Hills AONB, which would also need to be taken into account in considering applications.*

- *The Shropshire Hills Management Plan:*
  - *Valuing the AONB in Planning and Decisions - Protection of the AONB. In line with national and local authority planning policies, the AONB has the highest standards of protection for landscape and natural beauty and the purposes of designation should be given great weight in planning decisions, also taking into account the statutory AONB Management Plan.*

- *Encouraging a Sustainable Land Management Economy - Agricultural development. Farm enterprises need to be in harmony with the environment and not degrade this resource, which also provides an important economic asset for the future.*
- *Design of new agricultural buildings including location, structure and materials should be of a high standard appropriate to the AONB, taking account of the published AONB agricultural buildings design guidance.*

### **Cumulative Impact**

There are a growing number of Large Poultry Farms in the South Shropshire Hills. There have been 21 successful applications for the erection of broiler sheds in Shropshire which have resulted in 3,852,296 poultry places which produce an extra 26.97 million birds a year from these units alone. The extra production is resulting in environmental impacts particularly as a result of manure spreading. Poultry manure has twice as much nitrogen as cattle farmyard manure and three times the level of phosphate. This has potential risks for leaching into the water courses and leading to nutrient overload in the Corve which is already failing to meet statutory Water Framework Directive targets.

### **Traffic and tranquillity**

The B4368 road has a long history of accidents between the Corvedale villages. After a lot of campaigning and 5 fatal accidents, speed limits have been put within the village boundaries. The access to the site is just outside the speed limit for Aston Munslow and traffic speeds up along this section. The agent's report is vague about where on the applicant's land the poultry waste would be spread but as he owns only a small parcel of land south of the road it could be inferred that the waste would either cross the road to his land north of the road or travel the three miles through Aston Munslow, Diddlebury and Corfton to his main farm holding. During the summer and at weekends there is a stream of traffic along this road which includes motor cycles and bicycles. We contend that the addition of farm vehicles and HGVs would add considerably to the danger of the road as well as being disadvantageous to the experience of driving through an attractive and largely unspoilt countryside. The applicant's agent states that there will be one extra job created by this new enterprise but does not state where the employee will live and whether he/she will travel from the home farm several times a day or whether they intend to apply for an agricultural dwelling on site (if this is the case it should form part of this application).

### **Employment and Tourism**

The Corvedale is a farmed landscape and this landscape has changed over the centuries with changes in agricultural and forestry practices. With the advent of the motor car visitors to the area have increased and the road network has been adapted. Now, South Shropshire has become a major tourist destination, both for days out from the West Midlands Conurbation and for weekend breaks and holidays. The number of B&B, self-catering and hotel beds has increased and employment associated with tourism has in some areas generated more jobs than in farming. The AONB has been successfully promoting sustainable tourism and locally produced food. It is our landscape, our beautiful towns and villages and network of walks and rides which attract people to the area and which promote jobs in tourist accommodation. The applicant's agent writes:

*"Mr and Mrs Povall also operate a small, well established campsite in a field close to the farm buildings. This is a Certified Site with the Camping and Caravan Club and is very popular with*

*people visiting the area. The site receives very good reviews and people return year on year. It is feared that the siting of a poultry unit too close to the campsite could discourage people from visiting the site and have a detrimental effect on this enterprise.”*

The B&B owners and pubs in Aston Munslow and Munslow would suffer equally were the units sited close to their businesses.

### **Summary**

In summary, CPRE Shropshire objects to this application because of:

- The siting of poultry sheds on a greenfield site adjacent to and visible from the AONB,
- The cumulative impact of these poultry sheds,
- Creating a traffic hazard with farm vehicles and HGVs servicing the site on an already dangerous stretch of road,
- Odour and potential water pollution,
- Adversely affecting the tourist experience and consequently local jobs in tourism.

Yours sincerely

*Charles Green*

**C W Green MA FCA**

*On behalf of CPRE Shropshire*